

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph at page 1, line 25 through page 2, line 10 to read as follows:

Conventionally, a typical semiconductor factory monthly produces general-purpose products such as memory chips on the basis of several thousand lots. A production line includes too many lots and requires a long period of production. Because of this, it has been difficult to estimate the completion of the product after it went into production. Even in this situation, general-purpose products need not be especially considered regarding input of a lot in accordance with the delivery time, causing no serious problems. Generally, one lot can take in about 25 to 50 wafers. Of course, the lot can take in about 1 to 50 or ~~100~~ 100 wafers.

Please amend the paragraph at page 2, line 24 through page 3, line 8 to read as follows:

However, it has been difficult for conventional mini-fabs to strictly control the lot progress management and to correctly estimate whether the product can be manufactured by following the delivery time. In semiconductor products such as LSI chips, it is considered to drastically increase business opportunities by constructing an electronic commerce using networks such as the Internet. However, since it is difficult to conduct the lot progress management and estimate the product manufacturing, it has been very difficult to implement an electronic commerce for these semiconductor products.

Please amend the paragraph at page 3, lines 9-13 to read as follows:

Hence, it has been difficult for conventional semiconductor factories to estimate whether it is possible to conduct the lot progress management and manufacture the product. This has been a cause of losing business opportunities for mini-fabs in a SOC age.

Please amend the paragraph at page 24, line 25 through page 25, line 21 to read as follows:

Based on the simulation result displayed on the monitor screen, the user determines whether to purchase the product (step S6). When this determination is accepted, the transaction is passed. For determining whether to purchase the product, namely whether to accept purchase of the product, input means (not shown) of the client terminal 11 is used to enter information indicating whether or not to purchase the product. When the virtual factory 13 receives information indicating purchase of the product, it is determined that the transaction is passed. In this case, the virtual factory 13 automatically or semiautomatically directs the real factory 14 to manufacture that product (step S7). In an automatic case, after ~~it is~~ it is determined that the transaction is passed, the computer is used for issuing a work instruction to the real factory without a human operation. In a semiautomatic case, after it is determined that the transaction is passed, an operator for the virtual factory 13 is prompted to determine whether to issue a work instruction. After interrupt of a human operation such as confirming or entering the work instruction by the operator, the computer is used for issuing a work instruction to the real factory.

Please amend the paragraph at page 47, lines 4-16 to read as follows:

The present invention is not limited to the above-mentioned embodiments. The virtual factory used for the present invention need not necessarily implement strictly the same processes as those for the real factory and may simulate the real factory to some extent. Accordingly, the present invention can be applied to more large-scale semiconductor factories by using current computer systems. The network is not limited to the internet and may be capable of bidirectional data communication. It is possible to apply the semiconductor production system according to this embodiment to the electronic commerce method as described in the first embodiment.